

LEVINE MUSEUM OF THE NEW SOUTH: Video-Talkback grant request

1. Project Design

Civic context: How can a city of newcomers create "community"?

Charlotte today stands at a critical juncture in U.S. history. Immigration is a top national challenge and the South – historically one of America's most isolated regions – suddenly finds itself a magnet for newcomers from across the U.S. and around the globe. A 2004 Brookings Institution study identifies Charlotte (largest city in North and South Carolina) as the fourth fastest-growing Hispanic city in the U.S. Almost 140,000 Latinos are estimated to live in the 14-county Charlotte region. Other in-migrants are arriving daily from New York, Ohio, Vietnam, Bosnia, Somalia and a hundred other places. African Americans are returning South in record numbers, many attracted to Charlotte's strong economy. Indeed, 3/4 of Charlotte-area newcomers are native born. County population is exploding, doubling from 500,000 in 1990 to one million by 2010.

Roberto Suro, Director of the Pew Hispanic Center, predicts that future historians will look to Charlotte as *THE* national bellwether for how America addresses issues of growth and community in the early 21st century. Indeed, USA Today's cover story October 27, 2006, featured Charlotte as "microcosm of the USA's rapid growth and its struggle to keep up." Mecklenburg County is the prime example of "a boom community as magnet:" explosive growth; long-time citizens who have little experience with earlier immigration; a sprawling suburban region unlike the compact urban gateways which hosted trans-Atlantic arrivals a century ago. Charlotte-Mecklenburg is a living laboratory of a monumental shift.

Newcomers bring their own traditions, habits and assumptions – their own cultures. These can enrich a city, but they also create friction and tension as people jostle together. Harvard sociologist Robert Putnam shocked long-time Charlotteans when his 2001 national *Social Capital Survey* of 40 U.S. locales ranked Charlotte second from last in interracial/inter-ethnic trust. Civic leaders are now making community bridge-building a top priority.

Initiative Overview:

In partnership with other community organizations, Levine Museum of the New South is launching the NEWCOMER INITIATIVE, a multi-year effort leading to an interactive exhibit, extensive public programming and community dialog during 2008 – 2009. It builds on the success of the Museum's acclaimed 2004 COURAGE civil rights project, honored by IMLS with a 2005 National Award for Community Service.

Heart of the project will be a 3500 sq ft exhibit, working title New South Cultures – Clashing? Connecting? that will explore traditions of both long-time and new residents. Noted exhibit developer Darcie Fohrman (best known for her work at the US Holocaust Museum) and Levine Museum historian Dr. Tom Hanchett will work together to create the exhibition, reprising their roles in the COURAGE exhibition, which won the AAM 2005 Excellence in Exhibitions award. New South Cultures will juxtapose "quintessentially Southern" attitudes, customs and cultural artifacts with analogous objects/ ideas being brought by new arrivals.

Programming, both in the museum and throughout the Charlotte region, will engage a wide variety of participants and draw media attention. A public TV documentary will carry the exhibition's message into homes across the metro area. Civic dialog sessions,

modeled on the Levine's highly successful "Conversations on COURAGE," will explore issues of growth and inclusion, digging deeply into problems that trouble our community today. Cross-cultural gatherings in the Museum and across the metro area will bring together newcomers and long-time residents to learn about each other's cultures.

As with COURAGE, the NEWCOMER project seeks to create "bridging social capital" by using history as a catalyst for discussion of contemporary issues. The strength of the NEWCOMER INITIATIVE is that it does not simply spotlight one ethnic group. Rather, it creates interplay among immigrants from many countries, newcomers from other parts of the U.S., and – perhaps most importantly – longtime Southerners. All groups will see themselves in the exhibition and programs. NEWCOMER will probe connections and tensions generated by intersection of multiple cultures, and help people form new relationships across differences of race, ethnicity, nationality, and cultural background. Dialog is integral to all aspects of the project. By sharing stories, bridging cultures and facilitating conversations – at a critical juncture in local and national history – the NEWCOMER INITIATIVE has potential to elevate local discourse and inspire collective problem solving for a more inclusive community.

The IMLS grant project:

The Museum seeks IMLS funding for video-talkback technology that will be a central feature of the exhibition and will also play a key role in outreach as well as creating an historical record for posterity.

In 2005 New York Historical Society made national headlines for use of video-talkback in the exhibition Slavery in New York. Visitors recorded their responses to the exhibit's themes and those responses became part of the exhibit. Levine Museum has begun meeting with Slavery in NY developer Dr. Richard Rabinowitz and others at the forefront of this new technology.

In Charlotte, video-talkback will allow visitors to hear from their diverse neighbors – both in the museum and in the accompanying TV documentary. Excerpts of newly recorded video will be added to the exhibit regularly. Also, clips will be incorporated into the public TV special; these will be updated for each of its 6 broadcasts, giving an exciting immediacy. New South Cultures will literally become an ongoing and ever-changing conversation – newcomers and long-time residents talking to each other about stories and beliefs, hopes and fears, tradition and change.

Three key partnerships power the NEWCOMER video-talkback project:

* **Crossroads Charlotte:** In 2004, 55 Charlotte area civic organizations, businesses and government agencies launched Crossroads Charlotte. Under the guidance of Charlotte's non-profit Community Building Initiative, with financing from Knight Foundation and Foundation for the Carolinas, the Crossroads effort created four scenarios for the region's future, exploring the question "What course will Charlotte-Mecklenburg chart over the next ten years as it addresses issues of access, inclusion, equity and trust for all residents?" The Levine's NEWCOMER effort is one of many interlocking projects growing out of the ongoing Crossroads Charlotte discussions and workshops.

The interviews gathered via the NEWCOMER video-talkback recorders will, in turn, be used by the Community Building Initiative as it continues to hold Crossroads Charlotte discussions in public settings throughout the region through 2015. Writes Crossroads' director, "Brief, well-edited clips of real people expressing diverse opinions about real local concerns can get issues 'on the table' and help jumpstart meaningful public dialog."

*** Emulsion Arts, Inc. and WTVI Public Television:** Levine Museum is contracting with Emulsion Arts, Inc., Charlotte-based video producer whose most recent public TV documentary was nominated for an Emmy, to join the NEWCOMER exhibition and program team. Emulsion begins filming interviews in early 2007 with newcomers, with long-time residents, and with service-providers who can illuminate conflicts and commonalities. WTVI, Charlotte's public television station, has agreed to provide equipment, studio time and technical support.

a) The Emulsion interviews will serve as primary source material for Dr. Hanchett and Ms. Fohrman as they develop the exhibition.

b) Emulsion will create five short videos for the exhibition itself, which will complement the video-talkback footage.

c) Most excitingly, WTVI, Emulsion and Levine Museum will work together toward funding and creation of a 1-hour Newcomer television special that will combine the Emulsion interviews with material from the video-talkback recordings. WTVI will broadcast the program region-wide at least six times during the run of the exhibition.

Thanks to recent improvements in editing capability, WTVI will continually update the documentary with new footage from the video-talkback recorders – making each airing a fresh installment in an ongoing conversation that the entire community can listen in on.

***Atkins Library, UNC Charlotte.** The Special Collections Department, Atkins Library, UNCC, preserves and provides access to a growing oral history collection of over 1000 interviews collected by UNCC and community partners. Supported by an IMLS grant in 2002, Special Collections launched New South Voices <http://newsouthvoices.uncc.edu>, an ambitious program to digitize and create online access. To date, professional staff and graduate students have uploaded about 600 interview transcripts and 300 audio interview files. NEWCOMER oral histories gathered via the video-talkback and by Emulsion will join that permanent archive. 12 hours of talkback highlights selected by Dr. Hanchett will be transcribed and posted to the web. The collection will be a valuable record of a city in the midst of monumental change – accessible by scholars and general public in perpetuity.

Project management/mid-term corrections:

NEWCOMER, like all Levine exhibition projects, is organized in stages to ensure stakeholder input and staff review. In September 2007 at the end of Concept Planning, in April 2008 at the end of Design Development, and in September 2008 after Opening when video-talkback is in use, staff will weigh plans against reality and make adjustments.

2. Grant Program Goals

With IMLS funds for video-talkback technology, the NEWCOMER INITIATIVE will:

Primary goal:

* Support lifelong learning, helping citizens increase cross-cultural interaction and understanding, and helping Levine Museum engage new audiences. The focus on newcomers, plus the attraction of novel technology, will make the Museum a more visible and vital institution, increasing public awareness of the Museum and boosting visitorship/program participation. The technology and the outreach lessons learned will bolster the Museum's work long after the exhibition ends.

Secondary goals:

* Foster civic engagement, expanding Levine Museum's role in making Charlotte a more livable community.

* Provide a national model for using new technology to explore cultural history AND stimulate civic dialog around a vital current issue – in both an exhibit and TV special.

* Gather, transcribe, archive and make available oral histories and create a public TV documentary that will sustain community's cultural heritage and serve future scholars.

* Create a robust partnership between a museum, a public TV station, and a library.

3. How the Project Fits in Strategic Plan and Mission

MISSION • *To engage a broad-based audience in the exploration and appreciation of the diverse history of the American South since the Civil War, with a focus on Charlotte and the surrounding Carolina Piedmont.*

- *To collect, preserve and interpret the materials, sights, sounds and ideas that illumine and enliven this history.*
- *To present opportunities for life-long learning about this history for the benefit, enjoyment and education of children and adults.*
- *To provide historical context for contemporary issues and a community forum for thoughtful discussion.*

Since its founding in 1991, Levine Museum has used thoughtful, disciplined planning to define and achieve strategic goals. The initial plan brought the institution into existence as a "museum without walls." The second targeted purchase of a building and research toward a permanent exhibition. The third secured ongoing funding from Charlotte's Arts & Sciences Council, opened the renovated building, and made the Museum a required Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools field trip. The fourth plan 2003-06 addressed attendance growth, organizational capacity and programming excellence to move the institution from "talented start-up" to long-term excellence and sustainability. Board and staff are now at work on a new strategic plan that will take effect in 2007, emphasizing audience development and civic engagement.

The NEWCOMER INITIATIVE grows directly from the Museum's Mission Statement and from "Strategic Priority # 1" of the 2003 – 2006 plan: "Build awareness of the Museum and increase participation in exhibits and programs across a broad diverse range of the population in the Charlotte MSA." In particular, the alliance with WTVI and UNCC meets two key sub-goals: "Develop programs and materials to reach geographically dispersed and culturally diverse audiences in the Charlotte MSA;" and "Partner with other historical and cultural organizations ... educational institutions and businesses to create joint programs and cross-promote." The new video-talkback

technology, the WTVI and UNCC partnerships, and the lessons the Museum learns as it reaches out to newcomers will greatly enhance the Museum's long-term institutional capacity, paying dividends for years to come.

4.Strategic Plan: Process and Financial Resources

The 2003-2006 Strategic Plan came from a year-long series of sessions led by Board member Peter Browning, Dean of McColl School of Business, Queens University, Charlotte. The Museum's diverse Board (50% female, 24% African American, 10% Latino, including both newcomers and longtime residents), community stakeholders and all staff participated.

Planning did not stop with adoption of the document. In 2004-2005 the Museum completed the AAM's "Public Dimension" Museum Assessment Program, including a site visit by immigrant history/community dialog expert Liz Sevcenko of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum. The Museum participates in the annual UNCC Urban Institute Survey, which identifies problems affecting the community, and also allows us to track the public's unaided awareness of the Museum, which has moved from 9% in 2001 to 24% in 2005. Charlotte-based consultant Hilary Coman is now organizing community stakeholder, staff and Board sessions leading to the next plan, to be adopted in 2007.

The Museum is financially stable, owns its 40,000 sq ft downtown building, and has a strong balance sheet with an asset base over \$10,000,000. It has an extremely strong track record winning corporate and regional foundation support, including major grants during the past two years from Bank of America (\$500k), Wachovia, Knight Foundation, and Foundation for the Carolinas. In 2005 the Museum won a NEH Challenge Grant to begin an Endowment, which now stands over halfway to its goal of \$7 million by 2010.

A strong indication of support for the NEWCOMER INITIATIVE is a \$40,000 grant for planning from Foundation for the Carolinas, one of its largest 2006 awards. The Foundation has informally indicated that a second \$40,000 is anticipated in 2007.

5.Appropriateness for Project for Institution, Audience

The NEWCOMER INITIATIVE aims to draw participants primarily from Charlotte's metro region, a six-county area of 1.5m people, 23% black, 8% Latino, and 4% Asian. Since opening shortly after 9/11 – an era of decline for many museums – Levine Museum has steadily attracted 40,000 visitors each year. We have done especially well welcoming African Americans: 28% of Charlotte population, but 30% of Levine Museum visitors (not including school groups, which increase the figure). One reason may be that since the Museum's inception, African Americans have been represented on Board and staff in proportion to their numbers in the community. Today the Levine's Board and staff also include Latinos, Asians, Muslims and other newcomers, as well. Through NEWCOMER efforts, we hope to boost "unaided awareness" of the Museum in the metro (measured in the UNCC Urban Institute Survey) from 24% to 30% and also grow annual visitation by 10% to 44,000. The TV special, outreach programs, and media attention will bring the NEWCOMER message to many thousands more.

To reach newcomer groups, Levine Museum is already embarked on a series of smaller photographic exhibitions leading up to 2008. We recognize that no one thing will attract new audiences; multiple efforts over time are the key. Cambodia to Carolina (2006), Tradiciones: Latinos in the New South (2006-07) and Families of Abraham: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Charlotte (2006-07) are helping build community partnerships and visibility. A page-one local Charlotte Observer story on the Tradiciones opening quoted Latin American Coalition leader Raquel Lynch. "It's the arrival of the Hispanic/Latino community. To have an invitation by a renowned museum signifies we are fully participating or at least starting to participate in the mainstream."

The Museum's long-time Communications Director Ashley Thurmond will direct publicity efforts. As with COURAGE and Purses, Platforms & Power: Women Changing Charlotte in the 1970s, she will contract with a Charlotte-area public relations firm to help plan and carry out the campaign, and will secure media partnerships with the Observer, WFAE public radio, and other outlets. Special attention will be paid to targeted media that reach suburban newcomers and particular ethnic groups. The WTVI special and the Crossroads partnership will add considerable PR synergy. Curator Dr. Tom Hanchett, Education and Programs Director Laura Everett, Outreach Educator Rod Garvin and Executive Director Emily Zimmern are already giving talks to newcomer groups, ethnic associations, old-line social clubs and similar bodies – building contacts that will be used in creating and publicizing NEWCOMER activities.

6. Project Resources: Timeline and Budget

- * **May-June 2006:** Planning meetings with exhibition developer Darcie Fohrman, evaluation specialist Randi Korn, video-talkback specialist Richard Rabinowitz, members of Charlotte newcomer communities and social service agencies, and Museum staff.
- * **August-November 2006:** Foundation for the Carolinas awards \$40,000 grant. Exploratory interviews with community members. Planning with Emulsion Arts, WTVI.
- * **December 2006 – May 2007:** Front-end evaluation by Randi Korn or similar. Emulsion / WTVI films oral history interviews, transcribed and deposited at UNC Charlotte. Fohrman and Hanchett begin work on conceptual plan for exhibition.
- * **May 2007:** Hanchett leads AAM conference forum "Beyond 'Our Foreign Neighbors: Fresh Ways to Tell Immigrant Stories'" with Minnesota Historical, Smithsonian & Texas Historical curators doing exhibits that, like ours, show *multiple* newcomer traditions.
- * **August 2007: Year One of IMLS grant begins.** Planning session with Richard Rabinowitz or other video-talkback specialist.
- * **September 2007:** conceptual plan for exhibition complete; review by community stakeholder groups. Draft plans for programming and for publicity are complete.
- * **November 2007:** Work begins on WTVI NEWCOMER documentary. Emulsion/WTVI begin shooting b-roll to be used in documentary and in exhibit videos.
- * **April 2008:** Design Development completed, exhibit script completed; review by community stakeholder groups. Fabrication begins offsite.
- * **May-June 2008:** prototype video-talkback booth installed in Museum lobby, adjustments made as needed. Interviews are transcribed and edited as practice.
- * **August 2008: Year Two of IMLS grant begins.** Installation of exhibition, including video-talkback. Publicity drive goes into full swing.

- * **September 2008:** Exhibition opening. Editing of talkback interviews begins, transcribing begins. WTVI and Emulsion start incorporating interviews into documentary.
- * **October 2008 - August 2009:** Editing and transcribing continue. New footage inserted in exhibition on a regular basis. Formative evaluation of exhibition (incl. talkback).
- * **November 2008:** TV documentary premier at Museum, then first broadcast.
- * **August 2009:** **Year Three of IMLS grant begins.** Exhibition closes in September.
- * **January 2010:** All work funded by IMLS grant is complete. Footage deposited at UNC Charlotte, 12 hours of highlights transcribed and available on the web.

Project budget	grant \$	local \$
Richard Rabinowitz or other video-talkback specialist	10,000	
Design & fab collecting booth (lights, electric, soundproof, install)		9,200
Camera, microphone, speakers	800	
Computer hardware	2,100	
Computer software development	48,000	
Software licensing	10,000	
Playback stations (5) in exhibit		
(40" plasma screen, DVD or MP3, push-button, install)	18,600	
Editor to choose & insert new footage into exhibit (1 year FTE)	31,600	
Exhibition developer Darcie Fohrman (for work after Aug 1, '07)		30,000
Evaluation, formative & summative (Randi Korn or similar)		15,000
Planning, fabrication and installation of exhibition		420,000
Subtotal	103,100	474,200
Emulsion – preproduction and wrap (for work after Aug 1, '07)		3,150
Location interview photography and b-roll		4,000
Edit/finish (1-hour TV doc + five 3-min exhibit videos)	36,500	
Subtotal	36,500	7,150
WTVI – studio time, camera rental (HDTV)(work after Aug 1 '07)		10,600
Audio and gaffer grip		3,500
HD CAM tape stock and 30 tapes	1,500	
Closed caption (exhibit videos, 1-hour doc, 5 doc updates)	1,200	
Publicity for 6 broadcasts of TV documentary		30,000
Subtotal	2,700	43,500
UNCC Special Collections – intake and cataloging (all footage)		4,000
Transcription, web tagging, web upload ("best-of" 12 hrs)	7,080	
Subtotal	7,080	4,000
REQUESTED FROM IMLS	149,380	
MATCH		528,850

7. Project resources: Key Personnel (see resumes/bios in Text Responses Document)

BUDGET FORM: Section B, Summary Budget

	\$ IMLS	\$ Cost Share	\$ TOTAL COSTS
1. Salaries and Wages			
2. Fringe Benefits			
3. Consultant Fees	\$41,600.00	\$45,000.00	\$86,600.00
4. Travel			
5. Supplies and Materials	\$24,200.00	\$3,500.00	\$27,700.00
6. Services	\$83,580.00	\$442,950.00	\$526,530.00
7. Student Support			
8. Other Costs			
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (1-8)	\$149,380.00	\$491,450.00	\$640,830.00
9. Indirect Costs		\$37,400.00	\$37,400.00
TOTAL COSTS (Direct and Indirect)	\$149,380.00	\$528,850.00	\$678,230.00

Project Funding for the Entire Grant Period

1. Grant Funds Requested from IMLS	\$149,380.00
2. Cost Sharing:	
a. Applicant's Contribution	\$528,850.00
b. Kind Contribution	
c. Other Federal Agencies*	
d. TOTAL COST SHARING	\$528,850.00
3. TOTAL PROJECT FUNDING (1+2d)	\$678,230.00
Percentage of total project costs requested from IMLS	22.02 %

*If funding has been requested from another federal agency, indicate the agency's name:

Levine Museum of the New South

[illegible]